

A Message From ASSEMBLYMEMBER HARVEY EPSTEIN



ASSEMBLY MEMBER HARVEY EPSTEIN COMMUNITY BOARD 6 REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2021

Friend,

As we gear up for the legislative session, the Assembly is holding hearings on a range of policy issues. Today, we examined the prospect of safely legalizing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) which I have introduced legislation to do along with Sen. Pete Harckham. Next week, we will take testimony from stakeholders on how to better serve people with disabilities seeking employment. These hearings are open to the public and you can find more information below about how to participate.

Harvey

My Statement on Visiting Rikers

In mid-September, I visited Rikers Island and issued the following statement:

“Today we witnessed an appalling failure of government on Rikers Island that underscored the urgency behind closing the jail. The conditions at Rikers are deplorable, inexcusable, and violate basic human rights principles. It can’t continue. New Yorkers are sleeping on the floor, in garbage, and lacking everyday necessities like food, water, and medical care. The disregard for human life is beyond unacceptable. In the short term, the Mayor must use his authority to release incarcerated people at Rikers. The only way to end this crisis is to close the jail permanently, and end our over reliance on cash bail and incarceration as tools for public safety.”

My Stance on Open Restaurants

[pic]

I joined Assemblymember Deborah Glick and Community Board representatives at a press conference to oppose the City's zoning text amendment that would make Open Restaurants permanent in its current form. We want restaurants to thrive in New York and we want community members to be able to live peacefully in their neighborhoods. The two aren't mutually exclusive.

As written, the City's Open Restaurants proposal, which is based on a program developed on an emergency basis, is not ready to be permanent. Until the City presents a community-backed plan to address the noise, garbage, accessibility concerns, the proposal cannot move forward.

In my testimony to the City Planning Commission, I urged the City to reevaluate its zoning text amendment in light of the recommendations from the affected communities. You can read my testimony to the City Planning Commission [here](#).

Bellevue South Park and Stuyvesant Square Park Hang with Harvey





Recently my team and I took a trip to Bellevue South Park and Stuyvesant Square Park for a “Hang With Harvey” event. It was a great day to meet and greet constituents in the district living in the Community Board 6 area. I was happy to speak with many residents about COVID19, vaccinations, school and park issues, and issues pertaining to some of our NYCHA residents in the district. My office is always open for constituents to share concerns and ask questions. Whenever possible I will travel the district for more Hang With Harvey events to meet residents where they are.

New Food Benefits Coming to Families: P-EBT

FAQ: Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) Food Benefits



P-EBT Background

Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) is a temporary federal food benefit program for families to buy food to make up for school meals that were missed while students were enrolled in remote/blended learning. Benefits can be used anywhere EBT/SNAP are accepted, including most retail food stores and farmers markets.

P-EBT is for ALL NYC public school students regardless of family income or immigration status.

P-EBT applies to any school participating in the National School Lunch Program, including private, pre-K, charter, and religious schools. **P-EBT is not a public charge.**

There is no application for P-EBT, it is issued automatically.

- **DISTRIBUTION 1**
Covers March - June 2020, and was issued in fall 2020
- **DISTRIBUTION 2**
Covers Sept 2020 - March 2021, and started distribution in June 2021
- **DISTRIBUTION 3**
Covers April - June 2021, and will start issuing in fall 2021

For more information:

- For answers to commonly asked P-EBT food benefit questions visit the NYS OTDA website at otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19
- NY State P-EBT Helpline: 1-833-452-0096
- EBT Customer Service 1-888-328-6399 or www.connectebt.com to request a replacement card, check your balance, or activate (PIN) a card



All NYC public school students regardless of family income or immigration status are eligible to receive new funds for food, through the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT). P-EBT is a temporary federal food benefit program for families to buy food to make up for school meals that were missed while students were enrolled in remote/blended learning. It can be used anywhere EBT/SNAP are accepted, including most retail food stores and farmers markets and applies to all children attending NYC's public schools (including public charters).

Families can expect \$820-1300 for the 2020-2021 school year, exact amounts will vary based on the number of days a student was learning remotely each month. Money will be added automatically to existing P-EBT cards that families received in the mail last fall. P-EBT is automatically issued, there is no application. If families lost their cards, they can call the NYS Customer Service Helpline at 1-888-328-6399.

Supporting the National Arts Club



I was happy to help the National Arts Club secure state funding to upgrade their cooling and heating systems to ensure kids in the district can have a comfortable climate to participate in arts programming.

Ballot Initiatives You'll see on November 2nd

When you head to the polls on November 2nd ([or vote early at an Early Voting Site](#)), you'll be asked to vote for or against five ballot proposals. Here's an explainer of the proposals from The New York State Board of Elections: <https://www.elections.ny.gov/2021BallotProposals.html>

Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) APPLICATIONS OPEN

Click here for more information and to apply or visit <https://nysrenthelp.otda.ny.gov/en/>.

If you have technical issues with your application please contact our office at 212-979-9696 between 9:30 and 5:30 Monday-Thursday or by emailing help.district74@gmail.com at any time.

The New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) will provide significant economic relief to help low and moderate-income households at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability by providing rental arrears, temporary rental assistance and utility arrears assistance.

Details on eligibility and the application process can be found here:

<https://nysrenthelp.otda.ny.gov/en/>.

Report Issues With Manhattan Open Restaurants to NYC DOT

In addition to 311, you can report issues directly to Manhattan Borough Commissioner Ed Pincar Jr at:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/contact/contact-form.shtml?routing=mn>

Upcoming Events

Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities - 10/20 @ 10:00 AM

Both Federal and State legislatures have taken steps over the last several decades to ensure individuals with disabilities have equal opportunities to obtain gainful employment. In addition to enacting legislation, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, the U.S. Department of Labor and the Social Security Administration have initiatives available for both businesses and individuals to help prepare for and maintain employment. In addition, New York provides assistance through NYS Department of Labor and the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities. Despite this assistance, according to the 2020 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium, only 35 percent of people with disabilities living in New York State were employed in 2019.

The Committees are seeking to receive information from relevant stakeholders regarding the availability of employment opportunities for people with all types of disabilities, with a specific focus on what programs and services are available to prepare people with disabilities to obtain gainful employment as well as any potential barriers that may exist making it more difficult to participate in the workforce.

Persons wishing to present pertinent testimony to the Committees at the hearing should complete and return the enclosed reply form no later than October 18th, 2021. It is important that the reply form be fully completed and returned so that persons may be notified in the event of emergency postponement or cancellation.

Oral testimony will be limited to 5 minutes' duration. In preparing the order of witnesses, the Committees will attempt to accommodate individual requests to speak at particular times in view of special circumstances. These requests should be made on the attached reply form or communicated to Committees' staff as early as possible.

Ten copies of any prepared testimony should be submitted at the hearing registration desk. The Committees would appreciate advance receipt of prepared statements.

Attendees and participants at any legislative public hearing should be aware that these proceedings are video recorded. Their likenesses may be included in any video coverage shown on television or the internet.

In order to further publicize these hearings, please inform interested parties and organizations of the Committees' interest in hearing testimony from all sources.

In order to meet the needs of those who may have a disability, the Assembly, in accordance with its policy of non-discrimination on the basis of disability, as well as the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), has made its facilities and services available to all individuals with disabilities. For individuals with disabilities, reasonable accommodations will be provided, upon advance request, to afford such individuals access to Assembly facilities and to participate in the hearing.

This will be an in-person hearing. Masks may be required depending on policies governing access to the Legislative Office Building on October 20, 2021.

Feel free to contact Assembly Member Harvey Epstein's office with any questions or concerns.

Our office is located at

107 Avenue B (store front)

You can email us at help.district74@gmail.com or call us at 212-979-9696